

BULLYING



We believe:

1. Bullying is deliberate, repetitive acts which set out to cause pain or unhappiness and can be:
 - (a) **Physical** - fighting, tripping, bumping, pushing, kicking, threatening gestures, obscene gestures etc
 - (b) **Verbal** - threatening violence or unpleasant consequences, name calling, using 'put downs', picking on people because of their race, gender, religious creed, physical appearance or academic ability
 - (c) **emotional and indirect** - spreading rumours, gossiping, excluding someone from a group, non verbal behaviour such as looks and gestures, removing and hiding belongings, damage other people's possessions, graffiti, offensive notes or material, extortion etc
 - (d) **electronic** – e.g. use of a phone or computer to threaten, embarrass, harass, hurt etc
2. There is an imbalance of power between bully and victim
3. Bullying shows disregard for the welfare of others for whom we have a God-given obligation to care and protect
4. Bullying can have the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive classroom or school environment, affecting the individual's academic performance, and personal and social welfare
5. Bullying is cowardly. It stems from an inability to accommodate differences
6. Bullies put others down. It makes the bully feel better
7. Bullies usually target those students who can't fight back
8. Bullies usually operate in groups - they think the crowd will be impressed by their 'brave' deeds
9. On a one to one basis, the 'bully' can be a very nice person, but once there is a group and the insecurities surface, the 'bully' will 'perform' and create some entertainment at someone else's expense
10. Bullying can be compounded and perpetuated by the victim's response i.e. their hurt and anger
11. Christ's death is the highest price for every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain

Therefore we will:

1. Affirm that bullying and harassment have no place at N.C.S.
2. In general, suspend bullies from the school by parents and allow their return when there is remorse and an agreed plan to stop the bullying
3. Encourage students to reflect on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the ultimate way of dealing with wrongdoing
4. Counter views that bullying is an inevitable part of life (eg. that the only thing we can do is tolerate it) and encourage parents, staff and students in the building of a climate of respect, love and care for others
5. Provide a safe and secure learning environment for our students
6. Maintain the principles of the National Safe Schools Framework
7. Integrate systems of counselling, reporting and discipline which are responsive and reactive to cases of bullying when they arise
8. Support and train victims of bullying and reform those who engage in bullying

PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

General

1. **Watch for early signs of distress in students**
2. **Train students in anti-bullying behaviour** and what to do if bullied
3. **Hold preliminary talks** - first with students who have engaged in bullying, then with their victims. It is best to see bullies on their own as they are more likely to accept some responsibility for the distress that has been reported and share teacher's concern for the victim
4. **Express displeasure to the bully and sympathy to the victim**
5. **Investigate** - Seek confidential eye witness accounts
6. **Inform the Team Leader or Principal and the parents**
7. **Elicit suggestions and proposals** from the bully that will help the situation. (See Discipline guidelines)
8. **Resolution** - subsequently, bully and/or group are brought together for final mediation and resolution with the person who has been victimised
9. **Monitor** - There needs to be careful monitoring of the implementation and outcomes for the victim
10. **Monitor** - Close contact and supervision should be maintained with the bully throughout the process

Support the Victim

1. Counsel and develop assertiveness skills and tease tolerance techniques.
2. Enhance self- esteem.
3. Assess and deal with any "victim mentality"
4. Encourage the victim to respond with sadness not anger, display forgiveness, live friendship not talk about it.
5. Monitor

Train the Bully

1. Investigate possible causes for behaviour, eg. dysfunctional family, abuse by someone else, learning disability
2. Punishment - just and fair. Withdrawal from the situation in the first instance
3. Provide strategies, respite, more appropriate tactics to replace unacceptable behaviours
4. Through love, prayer and Bible study counsel the student to see the big picture, that ultimately no-one benefits from bullying. This behaviour damages our relationship with God and with others.

PROCEDURES FOR THE SCHOOL

1. Affirm the right of all school community members to feel and be safe and supported at school
2. Protect children from all forms of abuse or neglect
3. Promote compassion, respect and co-operation
4. Celebrate diversity
5. Exercise servant leadership
6. Engage the whole school community in anti-bullying strategies
7. Ensure that members of the community are aware of their roles and responsibilities
8. Train staff in how to develop, promote and maintain a safe and supportive school environment
9. Insist that any anti-bullying values, strategies and actions issue from our belief of the Gospel
10. Provide opportunities within the curriculum for all students to acknowledge the Gospel and its demands for love, courage and self-sacrifice
11. Be proactive more than reactive, by promoting compassion, wisdom and common sense more than rule-keeping
12. Regularly monitor and evaluate policies

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

1. Students are encouraged to care for one another. Bullying is everyone's concern.
2. Students are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to a trusted member of staff, even if the student is not involved
...It's OK to 'dob ' in a bully.
3. Students who have bullied will be engaged in a process of restorative justice.
4. Students who have been bullied will be engaged in a process of creative assertiveness.

PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

1. Watch for warning signs
 - a. physical injuries, such as bruises
 - b. repeatedly 'losing possessions'
 - c. reluctance to go to school or talk about school
 - d. altered sleep patterns
 - e. mood swings
 - f. personality changes
 - g. few if any friends
 - h. lack of interest in life
 - i. health problems
2. If a parent feels their child is being bullied, they should contact their child's Home Class teacher, a Team Leader or the Principal as early as possible.
3. Every term in the school newsletter parents will be reminded about contacting a teacher if they feel that their child is being bullied.
4. Parents should advise their child to tell a trusted member of staff. Ring the school if necessary.
5. Parents should not encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally.
6. Parents will be informed of any necessary follow-up.
7. Parents may be requested to attend an interview should any continuance of the offence occur.

BULLYING – PARENT GUIDELINES

What to do if your child is the victim of bullying:

Layer 1: Be alert

Watch for warning signs.

- physical injuries, such as bruises
- repeatedly 'losing possessions'
- reluctance to go to school or talk about school
- altered sleep patterns
- mood swings
- personality changes
- few if any friends
- lack of interest in life
- health problems

Layer 2: Listen

Listen and comfort! Acknowledge how bad bullying is. Honour your child's feelings. Wisely decide whether there is an over-reaction or if the matter is a "one-off" or if your child might have been part of the problem. Pray with your child – for them and the bully.

Layer 3: Forgive

Encourage your child to view the situation as a great opportunity for forgiveness and for bringing good from bad. Never encourage your child to hit back or respond negatively to the bully. Grace must be the life blood of robust relationships.

Layer 4: Fix

Discuss how you and your child might fix up this situation. Owning problems and not just passing them on to someone else to solve is a vital part of addressing bullying.

Rehearse how to (i.e. role play):

- Say "OK" and walk away from a bully
- Say something funny e.g. if the bully is taunting about having funny knees, say "I'm having a bad knees day!"
- Eyeball the bully and say "Knock it off!"

Layer 5: Tell

Instruct your child to speak with a trusted staff member.

Encourage them to take a friend or friends with them when they talk with this person.

Your child might write what's happening or draw what's happening and place it in the Office mail box. They might email a message, with details of what's happening, to a significant staff member.

Layer 6: Contact

Ring, email or chat with your child's Home Class Teacher. Write a note in the Secondary Organiser.

Layer 7: Persist

Contact the Deputy if the issue persists.

Layer 8: Be ruthless

Contact the Principal if the issue persists.